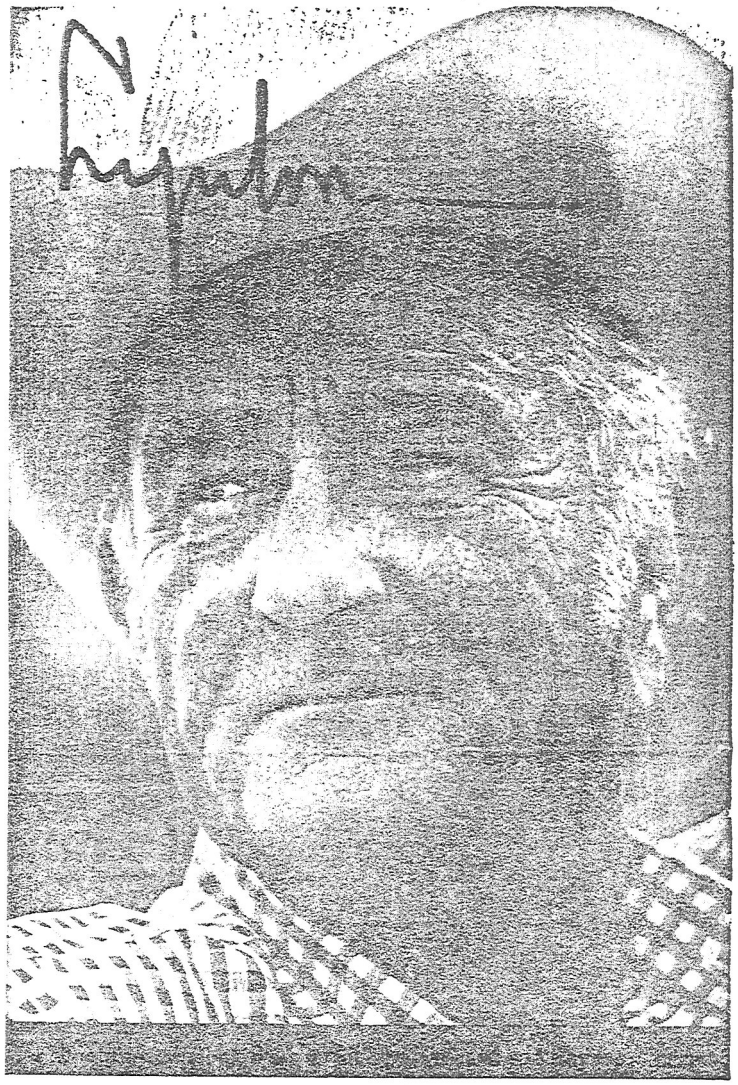

"We remember him as a man who once said he didn't want everybody to love him, as his enemies often claimed, he just wanted everybody to like him—and we remember him as a President of the United States, one of the mightiest and most maligned of them all."
Richard Harwood and Haynes Johnson authors of

LYNDON

"Lyndon Johnson, that dominant, flawed, forceful figure who came to presidential power on a clap of thunder and a beat of drums, all his life aroused strong emotion and controversy. When he left office quietly, discredited, disliked, and disparaged, he retired to his ranch to await a more compassionate judgment."

In LYNDON, Washington Post writers Richard Harwood and Haynes Johnson render that judgment. Their book is a close and critical look at Lyndon Johnson, the man, and LBJ, the politician. They trace his career from struggling Texas politician to wheeler-dealer Senator to controversial President. Over the years, as Post reporters, they watched him, traveled with him, wrote about him, and incurred his anger and commendation. They witnessed many of LBJ's petty cruelties and his touching moments of generosity and nobility. LYNDON is based on previously unpublished materials in Washington Post files and many private sessions with Lyndon Johnson, including an extraordinary 5-hour luncheon with the former President and Post editors; it's filled with recollections and anecdotes from friends, enemies, journalists and close companions of LBJ. Illustrated with more than 100 photographs chosen by the authors and The Post's Director of Photography, William Snead.

THE AUTHORS: Haynes Johnson (left) and Richard Harwood (right) are assistant managing editors of The Washington Post. Johnson, a Pulitzer prize-winning reporter, is the author of three previous books: "Dusk at the Mountain" (1964), "The Bay of Pigs" (1964), and "Fulbright: the Dissenter" (1968). He also co-authored two in-depth Post series, "Army in Anguish" (1972) and "The Unions" (1972). Both were published in paperback by Pocketbooks, Inc. Harwood has been a journalist for over 25 years. Since joining The Post in 1966, he has been a national reporter, foreign correspondent, columnist, and ombudsman. He has been a recipient of numerous awards for outstanding journalism, including, most recently, the George Polk Memorial Award in 1971. He is a graduate of Vanderbilt University and has been a Nieman Fellow at Harvard and a Carnegie Fellow at Columbia University.

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ing his scars, John Kennedy from Boston to Dallas. And RFK, whom Bill Eppridge tracked from a moment of exhilarated flight on an Oregon beach to his half-lit death scene.

Popes, panthers, cool beauties in the surf, Hemingway punting a beer can, My Lai and men on the moon—they're all there, and the lack of focus by which the sages foretold Life's doom are a terrific asset to this book. From the flaming ruin of the airship *Hindenburg* on page 9, the twin themes of war and death are so pervasive that one might think Life's picture editors moved in lock-step with the Grim Reaper.

Robert Capa, whose picture of a Spanish civil war soldier just hit by a bullet is an early classic of the genre, was himself killed in Indochina. Two other Life photographers were killed in action—Paul Schutzer in the Middle East and Larry Burrows in Laos. The theme recurs with the study in repose of a young woman after hurtling 86 floors from the Empire State Building, and an abundance of corpses in some ghoulish war pictures. Many of the death pictures are arresting—a Japanese socialist leader appears to be watching his own assassination—and they often satisfy the photographers' search for truth, revelation and finality. The Nikon necrophilia continued right up to Life's own death. Inhouse critics of what they considered excessive morbidity in a new feature "Beat of Life" dubbed it "beat of death."

As to the wars, Gene Smith best explained why men for whom it was no longer a novel adventure should flock to cover them like moths to flames. "The belief, the try, a camera and some film—the fragile weapons of my good intentions. With these I fought the war."

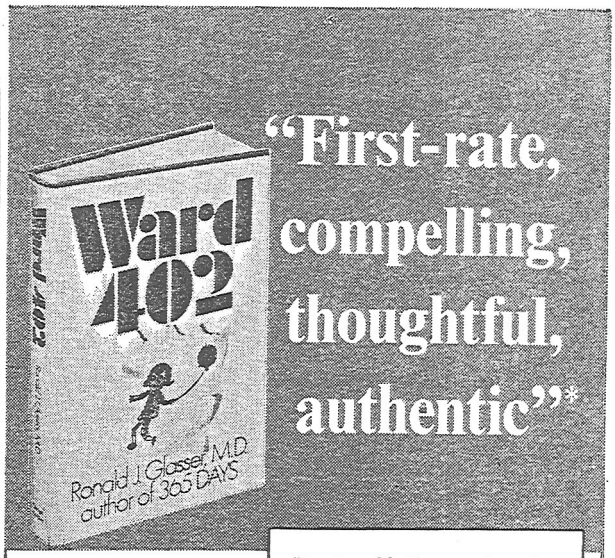
The pictures remain, but the larger purpose has been in the main a futile effort. This reviewer received *The Best of Life*, some three days after a B-52 mistakenly targeted a Cambodian town, killing more than 130 people. On page 181 there is a heart-rending picture taken in 1965 by Paul Schutzer. The caption: "A Vietnamese mother, wild-eyed with grief and terror, stumbles through the area of a fire fight at Cape Batangan with her dying child, struck by strafing runs before U.S. Marines landed." □

the patient invisible inching forward of mankind to a better world, justifying his efforts in the election campaign, mocking our pretensions of "Superman," reminiscent of Kafka's cockroach in *The Metamorphosis*, but with a certain sly low-to-the-ground humor that laughs away the latter's despair and sets us back on the road, moving by infinitesimal degrees forward with wry and "earthy" satisfaction. Thus in a seeming stasis, the high-minded Dr. Ott, in the terrarium in which he himself is interned, discovers sex through an experiment which seems to confirm his theories of melancholy and human consciousness while projecting Doubt ahead into a new life. Only in the autobiographical sections is the metaphor overlabored, for instance, the address to Snailville, when I imagined that Grass was providing explanatory notes on his own book for the mass market, perhaps in the grip of campaign rhetoric confusing a political audience with a literary one. Even in the journal, though, the snail gives to the text a vivid poetry, explaining himself, middle age, to his children. "I used to be able to laugh a lot better. I pass some things over in silence: my gaps. Sometimes I'm sick of being alone and would like to crawl into something soft, warm, and damp, which it would be inadequate to characterize as feminine. How I wear myself out looking for shelter." Doubt's collecting, painstaking, specific, is a joy to read, as if the prose were engaged in a wizard's ordering of the natural world. The story of Ott is a slow withdrawal from the Germany of the '30s, fired for doubting.

> A seventeen-year-old boy hanged himself in the gymnasium of the Crown Prince Wilhelm High School—from the horizontal bar—after his schoolmates had forced him (only a dumb trick) to display his circumcised prepuce in the toilet.
>
> A few of the guilty students were expelled. But in the presence of the assembled faculty Hermann Ott expressed skepticism: "I doubt that anything can be accomplished by expulsions as long as certain of the teachers see fit to assign generalizations such as 'The Jews Are Our Misfortune' as subjects for essays."

He arrives in the bosom of Danzig's embattled Jews, the Rosenbaum School, where he continues to question Zionism, the benighted patriotism of the old Jewish war veterans to the German state. As the authorities close in on Doubt, he mounts a bicycle and pedals out into the Kashubian countryside where a flat tire takes him fortuitously to shelter in the basement of Stomma, a bicycle repairman. There Doubt and his melancholy snails perform a miracle in a fable of Grass out of Grimm. The narrative of Hermann Ott is a short, elegant classic in the diary that anthologists will be sorely tempted to excerpt (although again, I must in honesty doubt that the end of the Doubt tale is handled as carefully as it ought to be, the last moments left unraveled in too offhanded a way for my taste).

Carping aside, the whole is greater than the parts. Well translated, the peppery taste of Grass's prose bites through the English, slightly acrid like the imposing stewed cow's udder he and his hero Dr. Doubt enjoy, gourmets of nose wrinkling. It is more than just another book—an event in the fall of 1973, a diary which we must all inhabit, make part of our own biography. Not only are the events of 1939 and 1969 set in parallel, but again and again Grass reminds us how the sirens tempt us to leap into intolerant, righteous charge on the horse of the Apocalypse. So the storyteller with his bitter, ironic parable sings the fall of the old animal heroism, blood lust, and would make us adopt a new heraldry, self-deprecating and humble to the point of comedy, snail.



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